

Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10

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COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 RSR-01 /122 W
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R 202041 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5847

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 08886

GENEVA PASS TO HERBERT BAKER, ILO CONFERENCE

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ELAB, GW

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS ON RECENT MEANY/ VETTER TALKS

1. SUMMARY. TWO NEWSPAPERS, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG (FAZ) JUNE 14 AND DIE WELT JUNE 15, CARRIED REPORTS ON THE RECENT MEANY/ VETTER TALKS IN WASHINGTON. ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS, VETTER TOLD GERMAN JOURNALISTS FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH MEANY, THAT HE THOUGHT THE DISCUSSIONS WENT WELL, THAT THE AFL- CIO APPEARED WILLING TO BEND A LITTLE ON THE QUESTION OF EAST- WEST CONTACTS FROM AN UNCOMPROMISING POSITION TO A WAIT- AND- SEE ATTITUDE, AND THAT FURTHER TALKS WOULD TAKE PLACE LATER IN THE YEAR. DIE WELT REPORTED SOME SKEPTICISM AMONG AFL- CIO OFFICIALS ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE TALKS WHO ALSO THOUGHT

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THAT VETTER YIELDED SOMEWHAT TO THE AFL- CIO POSITION ON EAST/ WEST CONTACTS. GERMAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (DGB) OFFICIALS TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT THE FAZ STORY WAS CLOSER TO THE OFFICIAL DGB VIEWS WHICH SHOULD APPEAR IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE DGB WEEKLY WELT DER ARBEIT (JUNE 29). END SUMMARY.

A SUMMARY OF THE PRESS REPORTS FOLLOWS:

2. ACCORDING TO THE FAZ REPORT OF THE VETTER PRESS CONFERENCE, THE AFL- CIO APPEARED TO HAVE YEILDED SOMEWHAT ON THE ISSUE OF EAST- WEST TRADE UNION CONTACTS: VETTER REVIEWED FOR THE PRESS THE DIFFERENCES OF VIEWS BETWEEN THE AFL- CIO AND THE DGB VIS- A- VIS TRADE UNION CONTACTS BETWEEN THE DGD AND LABOR ORGANIZATIONS OF THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. HE CONCLUDED THAT WHILE THE AFL- CIO STILL VIEWS WITH MAJOR DISTRUST THE OPENING TOWARD THE EAST, SINCE IT FEARS THE IMPLICATIONS OF A SOFTENING OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE, " THE UNCOMPROMISING REJECTION HAS GIVEN WAY TO A SUSPICIOUS WAIT- AND- SEE POSITION. THE AFL- CIO WANTS TO BECOME CONVINCED BY THE SUCCESS OF THE DETENTE POLICY BEFORE IT MAY ON ITS OWN OPEN CONTACTS WITH THE EAST."

3. FAZ CONTINUED: ACCORDING TO VETTER, WHILE THE AFL- CIO STILL DOES NOT HAVE THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING FOR THE DGB' S CONTRIBUTION TO DETENTE, THERE ARE SUFFICIENT INDICATIONS OF EFFORTS BY THE AFL- CIO TO UNDERSTAND AND TO CAREFULLY OBSERVE DEVELOPMENTS TO " PERMIT A NORMALIZATION OF THE FROSTY GERMAN/ AMERICAN TRADE UNION RELATIONS."

4. FINALLY, ACCORDING TO FAZ: VETTER SAID THAT THE GERMAN AND OTHER EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS HAVE DEVELOPED SOCIAL/ POLITICAL ROLES FOR WHICH THERE IS NOTHING COMPARABLE IN AMERICA. " VIEWED AS A WHOLE, THERE ARE NOW NO COMMON INTERESTS WITH THE AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS" BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES. NEVERTHELESS, " THE FIRM POLITICAL BELIEF IN THE NEED FOR CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FREE TRADE UNIONS REQUIRE CONTINUOUS TALKS AND EFFORTS TO LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER IN A SPIRIT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING."

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5. DIE WELT PRESENTED A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT VIEW OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE AND THE MEANY/ VETTER TALKS: IN AN OBVIOUS ATTEMPT TO SPEAK IN CONCILIATORY TERMS, THE DGB PRESIDENT RECALLED THE EFFORTS OF AMERICAN LABOR LEADERS AFTER THE WAR WHO HELPED TO DEVELOP A UNIFIED AND NON- CONFESSIONAL GERMAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT BY USING THEIR

INFLUENCE ON CHURCH AUTHORITIES IN GERMANY. VETTER
EXPRESSED SOME UNDERSTANDING FOR THE AFL- CIO POSITION ON
EAST/ WEST CONTACTS. THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT DID NOT
HAVE THE BEST EXPERIENCE WITH COMMUNISTS IN THE US. HE
SAID, " WE TELL THE AMERICANS, ' KEEP YOUR MISGIVINGS, BUT
AT THE MOMENT WHEN THE EAST POLICY TURNS OUT TO BE RIGHT,
WE EXPECT YOU TO REVISE YOUR ATTITUDE.' I BELIEVE THAT
THAT AMERICAN CRITICISM OF OUR COURSE MAY SLOW DOWN IN
THE NEAR FUTURE."

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GENEVA PASS BAKE

6. DIE WELT REFERRED TO A " RELIABLE AFL- CIO SOURCE" AS
STATING THAT VETTER ADMITTED THAT ERRORS HAD BEEN MADE
IN THE EASTERN POLICY AND THAT EASTERN CONTACTS " WERE

PROGRESSING TOO QUICKLY." CONTINUING, DIE WELT REPORTED: VETTER TOLD HIS HOSTS THAT ALL GERMAN WORKERS RETURN FROM THEIR VISITS TO THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CONVINCED THAT THEIR SYSTEMS OFFER NOTHING FOR THE GERMANS. VETTER REASSURED THE AMERICANS THAT THE GERMAN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS WERE NOT BEING SUBVERTED BY THE CONTACTS WITH EASTERN UNIONS. NEVERTHELESS, HE ADMITTED TO THE JOURNALISTS THAT THE EASTERN POLICY INVOLVES CERTAIN DANGERS WHICH MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. HE REFERRED TO THE RISK OF THE DETENTE POLICY LEADING TO A WEAKENING OF WESTERN UNITY, BUT HE SAID
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" IN THE SPHERE OF DETENTE, ONE MAY EXAGGERATE. AS LONG AS MILITARY STRENGTH BETWEEN EAST AND WEST DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE STABILIZED, IT IS BETTER TO STAND ON THE FIRM GROUND OF THE ALLIANCE."

7. DIE WELT DOUBTED THAT MEANY HAD SEIZED VETTER'S OFFER OF AN OLIVE BRANCH: WHILE SOME AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVES SPOKE OF A "VERY GOOD DISCUSSION," THE CONCLUSIONS THAT THEY DREW FROM THE MEETING DIFFERED SOMEWHAT FROM VETTER'S IMPRESSIONS. ACCORDING TO ONE AFL-CIO SOURCE, "VETTER LEFT US WITH THE DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT THE DGB LEADERSHIP HAS STARTED TO LOSE THE ILLUSIONS IT POSSESSED ABOUT THE MAGICS OF THE EASTERN POLICY AND CONTACTS WITH THE TRADE UNIONS IN PARTICULAR... FURTHERMORE "THE AFL-CIO IS ONLY WAITING TO SEE IF AND WHEN GERMAN UNION PUBLICATIONS STOP PRINTING PRO-SOVIET ARTICLES, WHILE CARRYING BIASED ARTICLES AGAINST THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND LABOR MOVEMENT. THE DISCONTINUANCE OF BOTH TYPES OF ARTICLES WOULD BE AN 'OLIVE BRANCH' WITH WHICH WE CAN DO SOMETHING."

8. FINALLY, ACCORDING TO DIE WELT, VETTER WARNED MEANY AGAINST SUPPORTING PROTECTIONIST US TRADE POLICY WHICH WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE POLITICAL IMPACT ON THE ATTITUDE OF THE GERMAN WORKERS TOWARD THE UNITED STATES AND THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT.

9. BOTH FAZ AND DIE WELT INDICATED THAT FURTHER CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS WOULD OCCUR LATER THIS YEAR, ALTHOUGH FAZ THOUGHT THE NEXT CONTACTS WOULD BE THE DGB HEADQUARTERS IN DUESSELDORF, WHILE DIE WELT REPORTED THAT THE DGB PLANNED TO SEND YOUNGER REPRESENTATIVES TO THE US SO THAT THEY MIGHT BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE THINKING OF THE AFL-CIO LEADERSHIP. (END OF PRESS SUMMARY).

10. FULL TEXTS OF PRESS REPORTS WILL BE POUCHED.
HILLENBRAND

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